

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PANAMA 03779 302122Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 AGRE-00 EB-08 COME-00 SAB-02
SP-02 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 AID-05
TRSE-00 OMB-01 /060 W
-----015880 310638Z /11

R 302109Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7248
INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA
AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL
PANCANAL
USSOUTHCOM

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EAGR, ETRD, PN, YO
SUBJECT: COMUNBANA MAKES FIRST BANANA SHIPMENT TO YUGOSLAVIA

REF: PANAMA 3155

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED: LOCAL PRESS WIDELY PUBLICIZED
PANAMA'S FIRST SHIPMENT AS COMUNBANA MEMBER OF 150,000
BOXES OF BANANAS (ABOUT 3,000 M TONS) FROM PUERTO ARMUELLES
TO KOPER, YUGOSLAVIA, VIA DANISH S.S. SAMOAN REEFER.
BANANAS CARRIED COMUNBANA LABEL.

2. THE EVENT WAS MARKED WITH PRESENCE CHIEF OF GOVERNMENT,
GEN. OMAR TORRIJOS, OTHER HIGH RANKING GOP OFFICIALS, AND
REPS UNION DE PAISES EXPORTADORES DE BANANO (UPEB).

3. TORRIJOS STATED FOLLOWING AT PRESS CONFERENCE: SUBJECT
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PAGE 02 PANAMA 03779 302122Z

SHIPMENT WAS MADE POSSIBLE BY GOP-CONTROLLED "CORPORACION
BANAERA DEL PACIFICO" (COBAPA) WHICH BEGAN CULTIVATION
FOUR YEARS AGO. COBAPA EXPECTED TO EXPORT ABOUT FOUR
MILLION BOXES DURING 1978/79. SUCH SOCIALIST COUNTRIES
AS SOVIET UNION, CHINA, ROMANIA AND BULGARIA OFFERED
GREAT TRADE POTENTIAL FOR PANAMA. THE ONLY PROBLEM THEY
WANTED TO SETTLE MORE AND MORE IN KIND RATHER THAN IN

CASH (YUGOSLAVIA REFTEL).

4. COMUNBANA AND UPEB REPS PUBLICLY HAILED EVENT AS OUT-COME OF THEIR JOINT EFFORT, DESPITE OBSTACLES AND UNDER-HANDED TACTICS BY FOREIGN TRANSNATIONAL COMPANIES WHOSE PROFITS WERE BEING REDUCED. END UNCLASSIFIED.

5. COMMENTS: UNITED FRUIT (UF) SPOKESMAN INFORMED COM COUNSELOR THAT BANANA SHIPMENT TO YUGOSLAVIA ACTUALLY BEGAN APRIL 28 WITH 150,000 BOXES BEARING COBAPA LABEL. BANANAS, HOWEVER, CAME FROM UF PLANTATIONS. THIS WAS UF'S ESTABLISHED POLICY TO ASSIST GOP. HOWEVER, HE ANTICIPATED HIS COMPANY WILL BE PRESSURED BY GOP TO DELIVER MORE BANANAS IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

6. MEANWHILE UF PUBLISHED IN ENGLISH SECTION OF "LA REPUBLICA" AN ARTICLE BY ITS GENERAL MANAGER BOBBY WALKER (REFTEL). HE DESCRIBED UF OPERATIONS AND POINTED OUT THAT PANAMA BANANAS WERE THE WORLD'S BEST THANKS TO UF STRICT QUALITY CONTROLS. THIS NO DOUBT BEGINNING UF EFFORT TO TELL THE PANAMANIAN THAT IT STILL IS THE ONLY BANANA COMPANY THAT BRINGS BACK 100 PER CENT HARD CASH EARNINGS FOR THEIR COUNTRY. JORDEN

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Message Attributes

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